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Truro Rural District Council.

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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

For 1944

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Medical Officer of Health.

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Truro Rural District Council.

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT YEAR 1944

Public Health Officers. Medical Officer (part time), holds diploma of Public Health, is also District Medical Officer (Perranzabuloe District) and Public Vaccinator for Perranzabuloe and part St. Allen Parishes.

Sanitary Inspector. Mr. E. R. C. Harvey, Associate Royal Sanitary Institute, whole time. Appointed Meat Inspector under the 1934 Public Health Meat Regulations. Inspector under the Milk and Dairies Order, 1926. Inspector under County of Cornwall Act, 1929. (Ice Cream).

Additional Sanitary Inspector Mr. A. H. Bennett, M.S.I.A., whole time.

Meat Inspector, Mr. G. T. Carter, is employed whole time at the Government Slaughterhouse.

The salaries of the first three officers are contributed to by the Ministry, under the Public Health Acts, or by Exchequer grants.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Rural District Council of Truro.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my report on the Health and Sanitary conditions of your district for 1944.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT

Area 106,504 acres.

Population :—

25,450. As the estimated mid population this is far below the population after the evacuation due to the flying bombs. Prior to this the steady return of the population to the towns continued. The proportion of very old and young was again very high and also the number of expectant mothers.

The number of visitors in the summer was small and was largely composed of children and war workers on short holidays.

Owing to the exceptional war conditions and the abnormal age distributions of the population corrected death returns are not given and vital statistics cannot be fairly compared with previous years.

There was again a further rise in the death rate, but the year can certainly be regarded as a healthy one and no serious epidemics occurred, in fact the generally satisfactory state of health of the population was well maintained. There was no evidence of deficiency disease attributable to war conditions, a great credit to the success of the rationing conditions in health services in the area continued almost unchanged and no special reference to them is made.

One matter of interest and concern is the question of the care and housing of old people not only the old and infirm. In many cases the younger members of the family have been in the forces and on munition work and it has become almost impossible to find anyone to help the elderly and still more so to find suitable accommodation for them where they can be tended. Bungalows have great advantages for the aged but must not be large or costly for very obvious reasons.

VITAL STATISTICS

Live Births:	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Legitimate	431	217	214
Illegitimate	52	30	22
Totals	483	247	236

Live Birth Rate:—19 per 1,000 of the population.

The improvement in the birth rate is welcome and is due in great part to many expectant mothers coming into the area.

The preponderance of male babies 11 is worthy of note as a large drop from the previous year.

The increase in illegitimate births is large and the presence of the Rosemundy Home in the area has to be remembered when considering the figures.

Illegitimate Live Birth Rate 108 per 1,000 live births.

STILL BIRTHS.	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Legitimate	11	2	13
Illegitimate	1	1	2
Totals	12	3	15

Still Birth Rate:—59 per 1,000 of the population.

Deaths:	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
	193	206	399

Crude Death Rate:—15·7 per 1,000 of the population.

This figure is misleading as already mentioned.

Note the great increaset of 33 in deaths, 20 male and 13 female.

Death of Infants under 1 year of age :—

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Legitimate	13	8	21
Illegitimate	1	—	1

Infantile Mortality Rate 46 per 1,000 live births.

This rate compares with 46 for the country as a whole and shows a rise from the year previous, which was 38.

The following death rates for certain diseases are worthy of comparison with those of the Country as a whole; being the rate per 1,000 of the population.

Typhoid Fever	·00	England and Wales	·00
Measles	·00	,,	·01
Scarlet Fever	·00	,,	·00
Whooping Cough	·12	,,	·03
Diphtheria	·04	,,	·02
Influenza	·28	,,	·12
Diarrhœa, Infants under 2 years	Nil	,, per 1,000 live births	4·8

The death rates for notifiable and other infectious diseases are in 3 instances appreciably above those of last year.

One death causes a big increase in a small population and the figures would have to be averaged over several years to give a fair idea in comparison with those for the whole country.

Three deaths from whooping cough among 167 notified cases again calls for the remark that the complications of whooping cough are a danger to life and greater care should be taken of cases particularly those under 1 year. There were undoubtedly a very large number of cases mostly mild in nature which were never seen by a doctor and so not notified, particularly during the summer months.

Heart disease and disease of the blood vessels of the brain accounts for well over one third of all deaths an increase over last years. Cancer deaths on the other hand show a further decrease.

Deaths from tuberculosis are actually slightly lower and proportionately to all deaths appreciably lower.

	Deaths	Rate per 1,000 live and still births.
Puerperal Infection & post abortion sepsis	—	—
Other causes Maternal	—	—
Total	Nil	Nil

This is a highly satisfactory return and compares very well with that for other parts.

Detailed Analysis of Causes of Deaths.

	Causes of Death	Males	Females
All Causes		193	206
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers ...	—	—
2	Cerebrospinal Fever ...	1	—
3	Scarlet Fever ...	—	—
4	Whooping Cough ...	2	1
5	Diphtheria ...	—	1
6	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ...	5	5
7	Other Forms of Tuberculosis ...	1	2
8	Syphilitic Diseases ...	1	—
9	Influenza ...	5	2
10	Measles ...	—	—
11	Acute Poliomyelitis and Polioencephalitis ...	—	—
12	Acute Inf. Encephalitis ...	—	—
13	Cancer of Mouth and Throat (male) and Uterus (female) ...	3	3
14	Cancer of Stomach and Duodenum ...	7	4
15	Cancer of Breast ..	—	6
16	Cancer of all other sites ...	9	15
17	Diabetes ...	1	1
18	Intracraniol Vascular Lesions ...	16	36
19	Heart Disease ...	57	59
20	Other Disease of Circulation ...	5	5
21	Bronchitis ...	5	2
22	Pneumonia ...	4	6
23	Other Respiratory Diseases ...	1	2
24	Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum ...	2	1
25	Diarrhœa, under 2 years ...	—	—
26	Appendicitis ...	2	—
27	Other Digestive Diseases ...	3	6
28	Nephritis ...	10	10
29	Puerperal and Post Abortion Sepsis ...	—	—
30	Other Maternal Causes ...	—	—
31	Premature Birth ...	6	2
32	Congenital Malformation, Birth Injuries, etc. ...	4	6
33	Suicide ...	1	2
34	Road Traffic Accidents ...	2	1
35	Other Violent Causes ...	5	2
36	All other Causes ...	30	26

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

WATER SUPPLY

(a) Piped Supplies

As in previous years it has been necessary to put into operation the emergency sources and pumping plant which had been installed at Perranporth, St. Agnes and St. Mawes. This being partly due to the great many Services personnel stationed in the area preparatory to " D " day and partly to the rainfall being below the average.

At Perranporth, in order to maintain a constant supply, arrangements were made with the Air Ministry to augment the supply from their sources and pumping plant at Blowing House. Notwithstanding this there were occasions, particularly at week-ends when some 8 or 10 houses on the top of St. Georges Hill, Perranporth were short of water.

At Flushing, as is usual for the summer months, the water supply had to be cut off for many hours during the night and day, no complaints of hardship resulting from same were received as the inhabitants are reconciled to the position which has prevailed over many years.

There are small piped supplies at Portloe, in the Parish of Veryan and at Portscatho in the Parish of Gerrans.

The village of Devoran, in the Parish of Feock, is supplied by a private underraking, which during the summer entirely failed. In order to give a supply the undertakers filled the Reservoirs (2) with river water, to which Chlorine was added. Samples were taken and submitted for Bacteriological Examination, the subsequent reports revealed that the Bacterial count rendered it necessary to boil the water prior to consumption for drinking purposes. As soon as the inhabitants took these precautions it was discovered that the water was " brackish," having been taken from the river at a point where the tides have access. Heavy rain at this time enabled this water to be run off and rapidly filled the reservoirs.

(b) Wells and Springs.

On the whole the supplies derived from wells held out better than the previous year as they reacted sooner to rainfall than the deeper seated sources.

The Public Pumps have been maintained in repair although at times it has been difficult to get repairs effected speedily owing to shortage of labour.

Analyses etc.

Frequent samples of Water from both piped supplies and Public Wells are taken and submitted for Bacteriological Examination.

The Water supplies at Perranporth, St. Agnes and St. Mawes are Chloininated.

Extensions of Supplies.

No major extensions of water mains have been carried out during the year by the Council.

The Services, however, have carried a main through Mylor linking up with the Falmouth Corporation main at Penryn. As this main follows the line proposed in the scheme for the supply of water for Flushing and Mylor the Council arranged with the Military authorities to increase its size from 3 inches to 5 inches. They—the Council—paying the difference in the cost. By so doing they ultimately hope to acquire the Military interest in same by valuation.

At Goonhavern, in Perranzabuloe Parish, the Admiralty extended the main to an establishment they had created there. The Council subsequently extended this for a distance of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to Carnkief where several scattered properties now have a piped supply available.

The contract for the laying of a main for Truro Water to supply in Old Falmouth Road, Truro to Playing Place, Kea, has been entered into and work is proceeding at a very slow rate, as a consequence the Council have again had to transport in order to satisfy the requirements of the householders.

Schools. Nothing has been done to remedy the lack of adequate water supply and sanitation, which haye been noted in previous Reports.

The provision of Canteens at some schools is most welcome.

Rivers and Streams. No complaint has been received of the pollution of Rivers or Streams.

Sewerage and Drainage. No extension of Sewers has taken place during the year.

The Pumping Plant at Perranporth has been maintained in good working order and no breakdown of a serious nature has occurred.

Soavenging.—Collection of House Refuse. A full system for the collection of House Refuse has been maintained during the year. The populous villages and some hamlets having a weekly collection. Other less populated hamlets have had a fortnightly collection.

Semi controlled tipping is the method of disposal.

Conservency. The Council are emptying the Closet pails at Flushing. A system, which it is hoped, will be soon superseded after the war, by a drainage scheme and water-flushed closets.

Closet conversions. During the year 20 privy middens have been converted to water closets.

Salvage. Waste paper, Rubber, Bones and Rags were regularly collected from all parts of the area.

The amount of salvage of all kinds sold to authorised merchants was 80 tons and realised £536 - 3 - 11

The costs in connection with the collection, baling and sorting the above materials was largely in excess of the revenue produced.

Public Conveniences. It has been necessary to close the Public Conveniences at Quay, St. Agnes and Chapel Porth on account of "hooliganism," and the destruction of fittings and damage to the fabric.

Churchtown, St. Agnes, Portscatho and St. Mawes conveniences have been maintained, with great difficulty, owing to repeated damage caused by persons undetected, during the year.

HOUSING.

No. of Houses inspected under the Housing Acts : 45.

No. of Houses inspected under the Public Health Acts : 64.

It has been extremely difficult to get willing owners to carry out essential work etc., on account of the shortage of labour and building materials. In very many cases, where the property would have given some further years of life, the delay in carrying out such work has rendered them irrepairable at a reasonable cost.

On account of the large amount of old property much of it built of cob in the area, this delay has been particularly disastrous aggravating the already acute housing shortage and leading to overcrowding. The return of evacuated children and families will largely be balanced by the home-coming of service personnel and other war workers so that the only real hope of improved housing conditions lies in the early building of large numbers of houses well situated throughout the area.

Hot and cold water supplies with baths and electricity should be installed in all permanent houses.

FOODS

The butchers meat for the whole of the Rural District together with that of Truro City is slaughtered at the Government slaughterhouse, Chacewater, situate in the Rural Area.

The Council employ a whole time qualified Meat Inspector at the Slaughterhouse.

He reports having inspected the carcases of 11,951 animals, 196 of which were condemned for human consumption which together with other oddments organs, offal etc., weighed 44¼ tons.

In addition about 2 cwts. of tinned foods surrendered by shop-keepers have been condemned as being unfit for food.

It is therefore clear how important expert supervision of the carcases is in the interest of pure food supply.

Milk. With the war time control of milk a good deal of overlapping in connection with the work of Dairy and Cowshed Inspection is taking place and with the multitude now "interested" in the milk business the poor producer is bewildered as to which of the "Inspectors" he has to follow when seeking advice on improvements to premises etc.

However, the Council's officials continue to inspect premises and give advice as heretofore. Over 400 visits have been paid to farms etc., producing milk.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis during 1944

DISEASE	Total cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital	Deaths
Measles	181	—	—
Small-Pox	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	27	10	—
Diphtheria	2	2	1
Enteric (including paratyphoid)	1	1	—
Pneumonia	47	8	10
Puerperal Pyrexia	4	1	—
Erysipelas	3	—	—
Cerebro Spinal Menegitis	1	1	1
Whooping Cough	167	—	3

Infectious Diseases. During the year whooping cough which was widespread and prevalent during the greater part of the year was mostly mild and a large number of cases during the warmer months were allowed out and about as usual and never saw a doctor, but, three deaths due to complications of this disease makes a further warning of its danger to life necessary.

Measles was widespread but no deaths resulted from it.

A great increase in the number of cases of pneumonia was due to more complete notification and to the increase in the other diseases which give rise to it. Notification of scarlet fever show a considerable increase, but it was of a mild type and many were nursed at home.

Two cases only of diphtheria calls for comment, and points to the value of immunisation of all children from 1—15 years. It is essential for all children to be immunised as soon as they become one year old, if the low incidence is to be maintained.

Immunisation of babies 1 year of age against diphtheria continues steady, most of the older children having been done 4 or 5 years ago.

Skin diseases in particular scabies and impetigo were not so prevalent, but too many occasions were noted where it was only when several in a family had become effected with scabies or an odd child was detected at school that treatment was sought in time to prevent most of the family getting it.

The presence of a bath and hot and cold water in every home will go a long way toward stamping out this troublesome complaint in conjunction with early treatment.

90 visits were paid to infectious disease and the premises and rooms occupied by certain cases were fumigated.

TUBERCULOSIS.

New cases and Mortality during 1944

	NEW CASES				DEATHS			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Totals	7	7	4	2	5	5	1	2

Tuberculosis. A further small decline in notifications is welcome but it must be recognised that actually this would not work out as a decrease in proportion to the number of the population.

A point of interest is the six new cases of non-pulmonary cases of this disease, a large percentage and an unusual one in this area. Again attention must be drawn to the back of sanatorium beds to enable those needing treatment to get it speedily enough to be of real value and the danger when beds are short of cases being sent home too soon.

A. RADBURNE FULLER